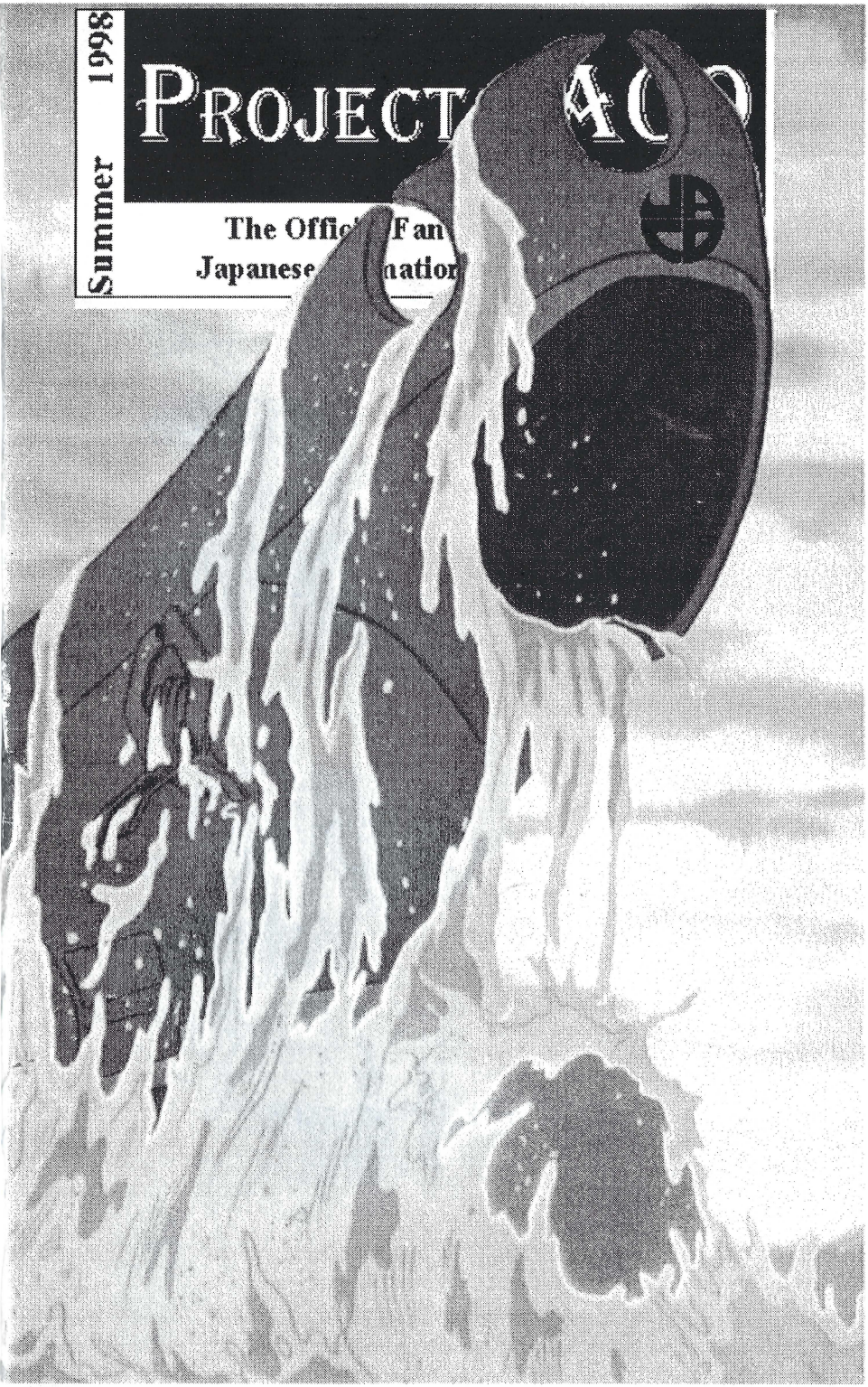
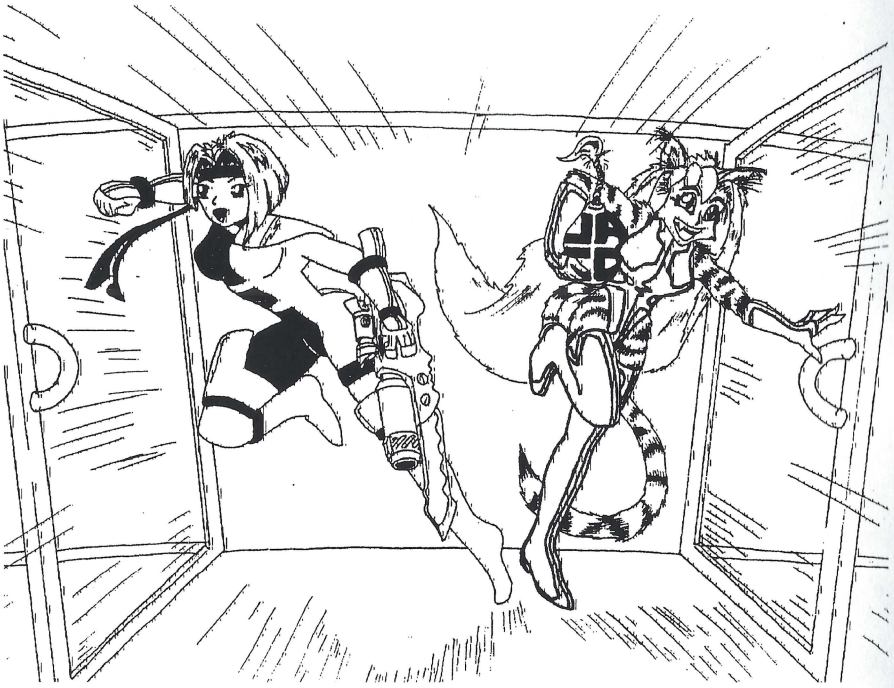
Summer 1998

PROJECT A-KO

The Offic[illegible] Fan
Japanese [illegible]nation



The Girls Of PROJECT JACO

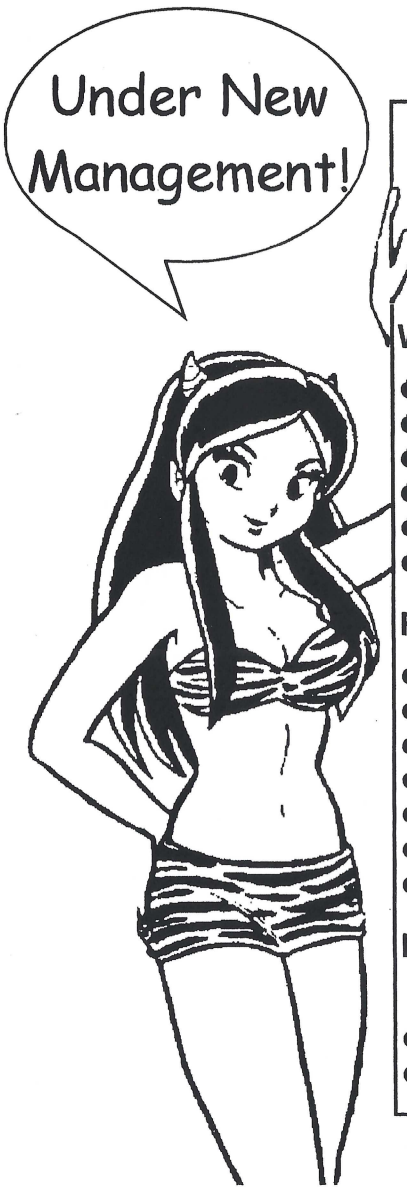


Are Bustin' Out!

Summer 1998

PROJECT JACO

The Official Fan Magazine of the
Japanese Animation Club of Orlando



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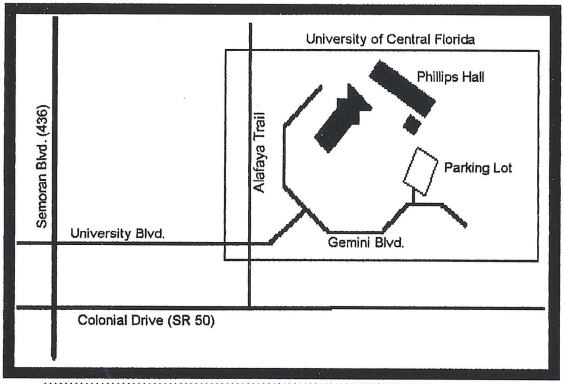
Project JACO is the quarterly publication of the **Japanese Animation Club of Orlando**. Basic annual membership dues for **JACO** are $15. Basic memberships allow borrowing privileges from our extensive club library of anime videotapes. Extended annual memberships (which include a postpaid subscription to **Project JACO**) are $25. Extended members have borrowing privileges, receive all club literature, and get discounts on club-produced items (like t-shirts). Lifetime memberships are $60, and offer all the amenities of an extended membership for the lifetime of the club. Issues of **Project JACO** can be purchased for $2 (or $3 postpaid).

Send payments to:

JACO
P.O. Box 780555
Orlando, FL 32878-0555

JACO meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month in Room 115 of the Howard Phillips Hall, at the University of Central Florida. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM and last until around midnight. Membership in **JACO** is encouraged, but not required to attend programming meetings.



JACO Officers

Ken Nabbe
President / Librarian

Nicole Kintner
Vice President

Sea Il Oh
Treasurer

Casey Hollis
Secretary

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Ken Nabbe
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Lonny Volat
Eric Wampner

About The Cover: *The cover for this issue was scanned from a cel of* Farewell, Yamato. *The battleship Yamato rises phoenix-like from the depths of the ocean. I find it symbolic of my return to the position that I held years ago.*

KANCHO'S KORNER

by Lonny Volat

Picture if you will, a man entering a dark, cavernous room. To his right is a raised platform with a huge console and a comfortably padded chair. In the center of the room, directly in front of the platform, sits a large-yet-frail-looking globe, flanked by a pair of smaller consoles. Banks of computers and other electronic marvels line the walls, and at the far end of the room, beneath an immense viewscreen, three more empty chairs face command consoles. The man walks around the room to the various stations, lovingly caressing each of them in turn. At last, he ascends the platform. Slowly, gingerly, he lowers himself into the seat that he once occupied, so many years ago. He lets out a contented sigh, for he has finally come home.

Greetings to all, and welcome to Project JACO. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Lonny Volat, and I am the new editor of JACO's official club fanzine. Or the old editor, if you will. Years ago, along with several others, I helped to create this club and its quarterly publication. When the first editor decided to step down, I took over the helm.

Unfortunately, circumstances forced me to move from the Orlando area, and I left the club for several years. In my absence, others have stepped up to carry on the task of producing Project JACO, including Dade Bell, who revived the old girl last year. Dade's writing was one of the chief factors in my returning to JACO, and it's been my pleasure to contribute articles to him these past few issues.

But Dade has decided to resign as editor, for reasons that he will explain later in this issue, and so I find myself once again holding the wheel. As was written long ago, some are born into greatness and others have it thrust upon them. What this has to do with me, I don't know, but it sure sounds nice, doesn't it?

There will be several changes to the layout of Project JACO. Each issue will be divided into three basic sections. There will be a news section, which will contain messages from club officers and a few small columns such as ConWatch (which will give information concerning upcoming conventions which feature anime). The bulk of the issue will have the traditional fare of video, music, and game reviews, as well as feature articles. The final section will be devoted to the fun stuff, like fan art, Dade's Giant Bri-O photo stories (if he wishes to continue them), and possibly some fan-fiction.

The last item has been a topic

of some controversy, and it hasn't been fully accepted yet. So fanfics will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If you have something that you want to submit, corner me at one of the meetings and tell me about it.

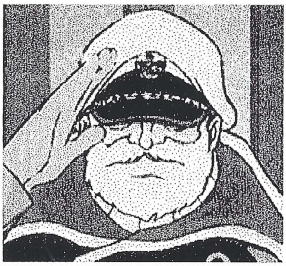
What I'm looking for is writers and artists who are willing to help make our fanzine better than ever. I'll be hanging around during the meetings, so if you have any interest at all in being a contributor, let me know! The more people we have, the better it will be! Having a dozen people write one article apiece is better than having three people writing four articles each. And with the number of JACO members who have shown artistic talent, we shouldn't need to showcase artists from outside the club. This is our newsletter, our Project JACO! The best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be.

Project JACO, hasshin!

Lonny Volat
Editor-In-Chief

ConWatch™

Anime Expo '98	
Anaheim, CA	July 03
Animethon 4	
Edmonton, Ontario	July 11
Nan Desu Kon	
Denver, CO	July 17
Otakon '98	
Washington D.C.	August 07
San Diego Comic-Con	
San Diego, CA	August 13
Anime North	
Toronto, Ontario	August 22
Dragon Con	
Atlanta, GA	Sept. 03
AnimeFEST! '98	
Dallas, TX	Sept. 04
C-Kon	
Muncie, IN	Sept. 11
Anime Iowa '98	
Iowa City, IA	Sept. 18



Fireside Chat

A Message From The President

The Role of the Anime Club President

You are holding the newest copy of Project JACO and it has what could be called a somewhat new look. Our current Editor, Lonny Volat, is not a newcomer to the creation of fanzines, and certainly not to Project JACO, but last time Lonny produced a volume of this publication, Gunjim was still writing articles. (Ed: Gunjim was the codename for founding club member Jim Calbeto.) I have no idea what direction Lonny will take this publication, but I am confident it will be the right one.

Well we have a number of items coming up in the next few months. First and foremost is our annual expedition to Anime Weekend Atlanta, a convention going into its 4th year, and it is still just as quaint as it was when it started all those years ago at the Castlegate Motel in Atlanta. This year should be a treat, with the inclusion of the object of many an Anime fan's dreams, Apollo Smile. The pop singer that has be dubbed the 'live action Anime girl'. True or not, it does not really matter in the long run. No matter what should be interesting none the less. Even after the AWA Music Videotape debacle (and other items) that made this President consider not even attending, the experiences from last year outweighed the problems I perceived afterwards. I hope to see you in Atlanta with me this October at the Marriott. On the local front, our Vice-President, Nicole Kintner, is currently planning our representation in the UCF Activities fair this year, and from the exposure it gave us in previous years, this should help boost our recognition on campus. Even though I do not participate in this event myself, I do look forward to it and the great job its organizers do each year.

On the programming front, we have hit a number of snafus that have delayed the completion of *Masion Ikkoku* for another 3 weeks. So I figure we will finish it early in 1999. Currently we are scheduled to finish *Escaflowne* in three meetings and *Greenwood* at our next. These will be replaced by some brand new series that former club president Fred Leggett has been able to locate from his extensive network in anime fandom. Fred still fascinates the hell out me with who he knows and what he can get. This means the club library has swelled to nearly 300 tapes. The problem is that the Library Listing only shows about 271 of these. Expect a version 4.02 on the scene soon.

Currently the club is going under another change, one that I hope will be for the best. With the constant influx of members and their memberships, the club has become more and more a business then a division of fandom. I have become more concerned with library

transactions and business process tracking than the actual Anime we watch each meeting. This has caused a distant look at fandom in general from this president. After days of thought, I have come to the realization that something must be done before this spiral continues in a negative direction. This has caused me to redefine the roles of much of the officer corps.

First, I will be recreating the office of Recording Secretary, and redefine Casey Hollis' current position as that of Corresponding Secretary. Second, there will be a line of division in the officer corps regarding Fan and Business Issues. The President and Recording Secretary will handle issues defined as 'Business' in nature. This would include monetary items, membership, library management, and the actual running of the Club.

The club's Vice-President and Corresponding Secretary will handle issues that 'Fan' in nature. This will include recruitment, local/university activities, Project JACO, and Web Page Design. This will now mean the Club Librarian will report to the President, and the Editor-in-Chief of Project JACO will continue to report to the Vice-President. Finally in this 'reorganization', the Treasurer will continue his current duties and responsibilities. I am hoping these changes will allow the club to be more focused on each side of the items that require it to function.

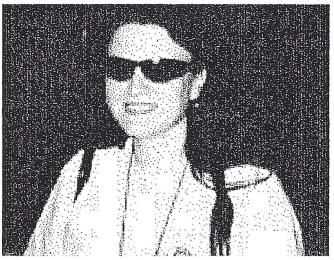
The above changes may seem more formal and business like, but that is the skill I bring to the club. I can not draw, sing, or even write a story, but I can organize. The club has a number of people in key positions that are extremely creative, and not pulling from those resources would be a crime in itself. I know that these changes will allow the Japanese Animation Club of Orlando to become even better rounded, and continue to promote anime here in Central Florida.

Kenneth Nabbe
President
The Japanese Animation Club of Orlando

****

"Dr. Kent, I look across the expanse that is the Disney/MGM Studios, and have to feel saddened. We have failed. EFA's troops are now beating down the doors of the Tower, and General Vague's elite troops have defeated the Sweat Shop 4. This is our final stand, and soon it will fall. Without us, Kathy Lee Gifford will not be able to defend against EFA's combined forces, and her empire is doomed to fall. God save our Queen."

-The Evil Joey Snackpants, Esq.



STUFF AROUND THE CLUB

A Message From The Vice-President

Hello, and welcome to another fun filled issue of Project JACO! For those of you who don't me, I'm Nicole, vice-president and goddess of JACO. And as you can see, you are not to take me too seriously. Now that the introduction is out of the way, let's move on.

As I'm sure you've noticed by now, there has been a changing of the guard in our club's official fanzine. Dade Bell, Project JACO's editor for over a year now, is taking a break. He will do the occasional issue, while Lonny Volat has stepped up to take over the regular run of Project JACO. We thank Dade for all his hard work in resurrecting the fanzine and making it such a wonderful book, and we're looking forward to great things from Lonny. Good Luck!

Well, it's that time of the year again! School's out, and the summer is in full swing. And we all know what that means: Cons! Anime conventions are everywhere, and they are pulling some really impressive guests! Anime Expo is featuring Watase Yu, creator of Fushigi Yuugi (Wah! I want to go!), and Otakon has Kawamori Shoji, creator of Macross and Vision of Escaflowne. Exciting! If you can, you should try to attend at least one anime con. Believe us, they're tons of fun, and informative, too!

In club news, JACO is still going strong. As our fall semester approaches, there will be some changes in the programming. We'll be wrapping up Kimagure Orange Road and Vision of Escaflowne soon. Replacing them will be Rurouni Kenshin and Legend of the Galactic Heroes, respectively.

Also, we will be attending Activities Fair again at the beginning of the semester. Look for a Back-to-School programming meeting for the meeting the Saturday after the fair. We'll have door prizes and food, plus special features!

Former editor in chief Dade Bell has won in the Animerica Mecha Challenge! His design in the Crusoe Da Yo! category beat out all the others, and was judged by Yamashita Akihiko (character designer for Giant Robo)! Check out his design in Vol. 6, issue 5 of Animerica, on stands now! Congratulations, Dade!

One other event of note: On June 13th, some JACO members attended the Central Florida Film Festivel to view a sneal peek at Disney's dub of Kiki's Delivery Service. As many of you know, Disney is releasing several of Miyazaki's films on video, beginning with Kiki's this fall. Phil Hartman is the voice of Jiji, in what may have been his last voice-acting role. Out of the films being released. Princess Monokoe is the only one planned to hit theaters.

Disney's Kiki's dub was

Continued On Page 23

"It's Been Such A Long Time, I Think I Should Be Going."
-Boston

A Farewell From The Former Editor

Hi, everybody. This was originally supposed to be my last issue of Project JACO. However, a lot of good things have happened in my life to fill my time up and unfortunately I wouldn't have been able to give Project JACO the attention it deserves.

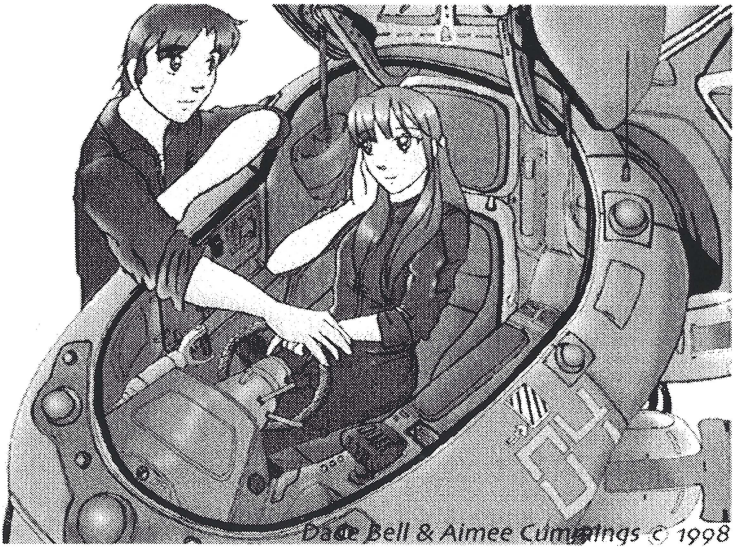
Another item is that I'm pretty well out of the loop when it comes to JACO. As some of you may know I live in West Palm Beach, which is 3 hours away from Orlando. As you can well imagine, I'm not able to make a whole lot of meetings. The fact that I can't make meetings has put me out of touch with the needs and directions of the club. And since this is the club fanzine, I have to step back and let someone else who is more familiar with the club's current issues take over.

Lonny Volat was editor of Project JACO years back and helped to make it one of the premiere fanzines of its day. Now that Lonny has returned and has been enthusiastic about being editor again, who am I to stand in his way? Lonny's a good guy and his enthusiasm for the club is infectious. So, with Lonny at the wheel, I feel very comfortable about stepping down.

My tenure as Editor began when I, along with some other JACO old fogeys, went to AWA and got excited about

Aimee Cummings © 1998

rejuvenating the club. I'd always wanted to do Project JACO and



bring it back from the limbo it had been in since 1993.

So, upon returning from AWA, I sat down with my little Mac and Quark XPress and proceeded to lay out a fanzine. It did pretty well and so I went on to do another four issues. During that time, JACO steadily chugged along, getting bigger and better, and in a sense, I became obsolete. Well, never to stand in the way of progress (*except when it comes to music- ABBA forever!*), I now realize that my job is done. Project JACO is back and doing very well, and under the control of Lonny, it's ready to move into another phase of JACO's life.

As for me, I'll be spending my time working on animated shorts, a comic anthology with a couple other intrepid JACO members, and looking forward to a future with a very special girl (*who did the cat-girl pic and drew the people in the other pic- thanks Aimee*).

JACO's future is bright, as is the future of Project JACO and myself. So with that, M3-Chan (*the oldest JACO mascot design in modern service and the mascot of Project JACO under my tenure*) and myself will fade away into JACO's past; becoming a footnote in the club's history.

Who knows, you may see me again the next time I decide to do a Giant Bri-O installment or maybe do a small fan art piece. But until then, I hope you have fond memories of my Project JACO and had as much fun reading it as I did making it. It's been a blast.

Goodbye,
Dade W. Bell

DATELINE: MEGACON 98

by Erik Larson

At last. We have put that witch we knew as MegaCon to rest. My God, what a trip. What an adventure. What a ride. I, the new club secretary, have taken it upon myself to enlighten those who did not attend and stoke the memories of those who did, whether they want to or not. *(Ed: Since writing this, Erik has been replaced as club secretary by Casey Hollis.)*

Thursday: The Gathering Storm

You'll have to excuse the fact that not much happened. Setup went amazingly smoothly, no real glitches or problems. I was bummed when I found out that birthday boy Dade Bell was not going to be in town but, as the bad boys say, whatcha gonna do? We put up most of the decorations, finally got the lighting and table arrangements figured out, and got the projector wired up and fired up. We got finished around nine, a remarkable feat, considering. Being on the third floor of the center, away from most of the con activities, we had almost no interference from the MegaCon staff, and we found that we could maintain order on our own.

Our victory over the Evil Gods of Challenge and Doubt assured, we meandered over to Bennigans for a celebratory feast. With our bellies full and our course set we broke for the night. We were ready. This was what we believed in, what we hoped for. It was up to us now, and us alone. God help us. God help us all.

Friday: Lo, The Tumult Commences

Bright and early, nine a.m. Car pooled to the Expo center with Joseph Kosturas at ten-thirty, after he got lost trying to pick me up. My fault: I gave him the directions in Swahili. We arrived and began setting up the banners, posters, and the AV equipment. Once everything was set, we began our stupendous video programming. All in all we had a good mix of stuff: mecha, anti-mecha, girls with guns, guys without guns, and finally thinking, not-thinking. All was going well. Too well. We knew it was too good to be true. Finally: *REALITY STRUCK!*

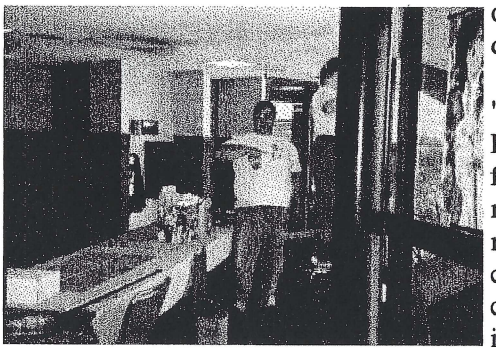
It was bad enough that I was totally broke. Never go to a con broke. Then Nicole's favorite Escaflowne banner was lifted by parties unknown, which got a lot of people besides our Kitten Dujour upset and caused us to take down some of the other posters just to be on the safe side, and they looked so nice up on the walls, too! A pity SOME fan-boys aren't very trustworthy people.

It was our intention to throw a

party for Dade and Ken, whose birthdays were on March 16th and 20th, respectively, but there weren't enough people to attend: Lonny (Volat) and Joe (Vecchio) hadn't yet arrived, and as I mentioned earlier, Dade wasn't even going to be there! Needless to say, you can't have a party if you don't have any friggin' people. Unless you're not master of your domain, that is.

Saturday: Ye Gods!

Now it truly begins. By average we had a bigger crowd and a better selection of videos to show than the previous year's MegaCon. Armed with newly acquired money and a badge, I entered the dealers room and was greeted by lots and lots of...VIDEO PIRATES?!?!?!? Curse their scurvy-ridden hides! Skillfully dodging these denizens of the underworld, I proceeded to see what this convention had to offer a lost soul like me. Though comics are the mainstay of my diet, I would be amiss if I got out without buying some soundtracks. These are my life. Which only goes to show.



My appetite assuaged, I then went to see how the Prince of Plastic, John Bohlen, was doing. John had his own table in the dealer's room, courtesy of JACO and the MegaCon staff, and he brought all of his toys with him, including a cool flashing cannon. I kept an eye on his table for him while he took a break and almost a dozen people tried to buy it, even one guy from a small movie company. The man knows his moulding.

But of course no silver lining could be complete without a cloud. Once more, parties unknown had made their presence felt, stealing my Rei poster! Is there no level to which these people will sink? Why can't they roll drunks like everybody else? Oh, the humanity! Fortunately, that was the last we'd heard of these villainous scum, perhaps they were sucked into an otherworldly dimension by Al Simmons, aka Spawn, who was dazzling congoers at a table of his own in the dealer's room.

The "V" Brothers, Lonny and Joe, finally arrived, making our membership complete. We caught Ken involved in a game of "Tragic: The Festering" and decided the best way to combat this was to surround him and sing as badly and as loudly as we could. It didn't help. After that I attended Anime Hell, of which I had only heard a vague rumor, and I left with a feeling of awe and nausea I'll not soon forget.

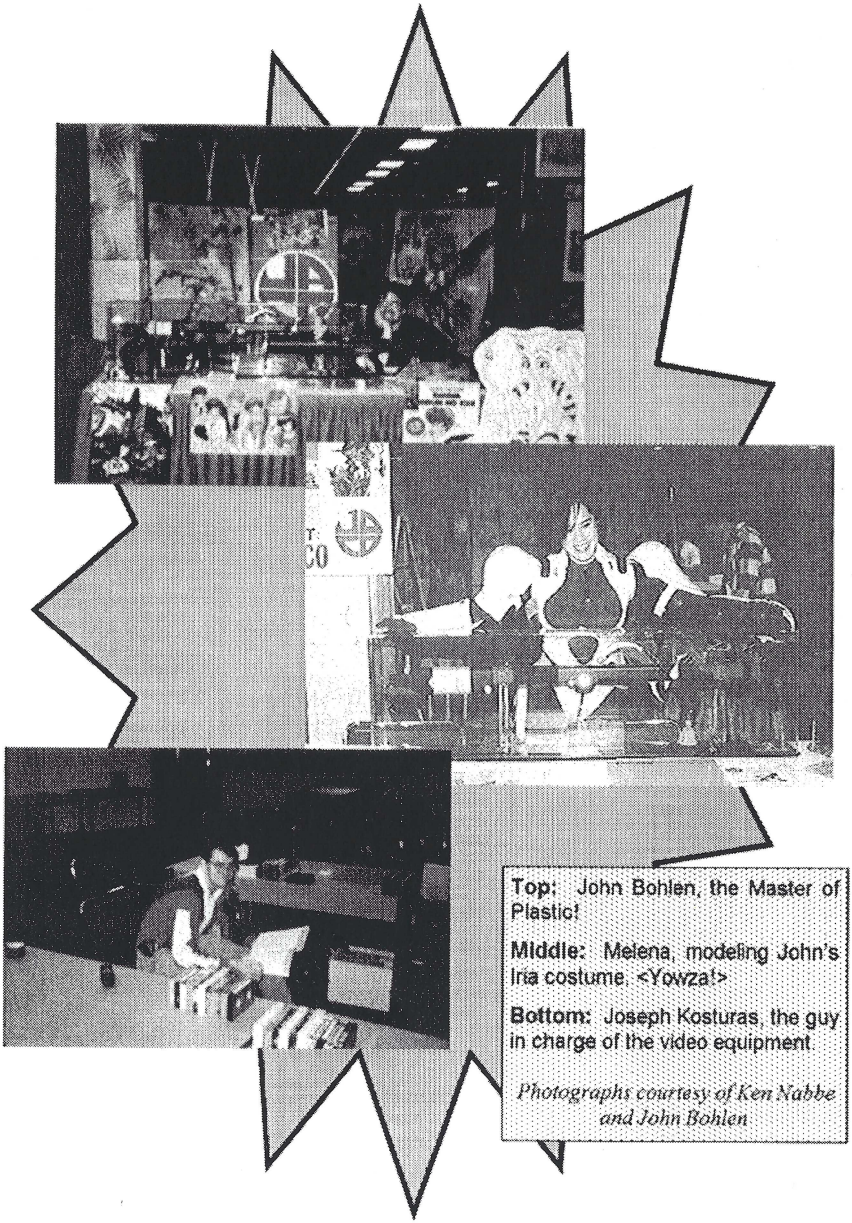
Sunday: Dust In The Wind

Well, I don't know whether to feel

Above Left: JACO Members Fred Leggett, John Stepp, and Casey Hollis man the membership table at MegaCon '98.

Above: Eric Wampner and Nicole Kintner putting up decorations.

Photographs courtesy of Ken Nabbe



Top: John Bohlen, the Master of Plastic!

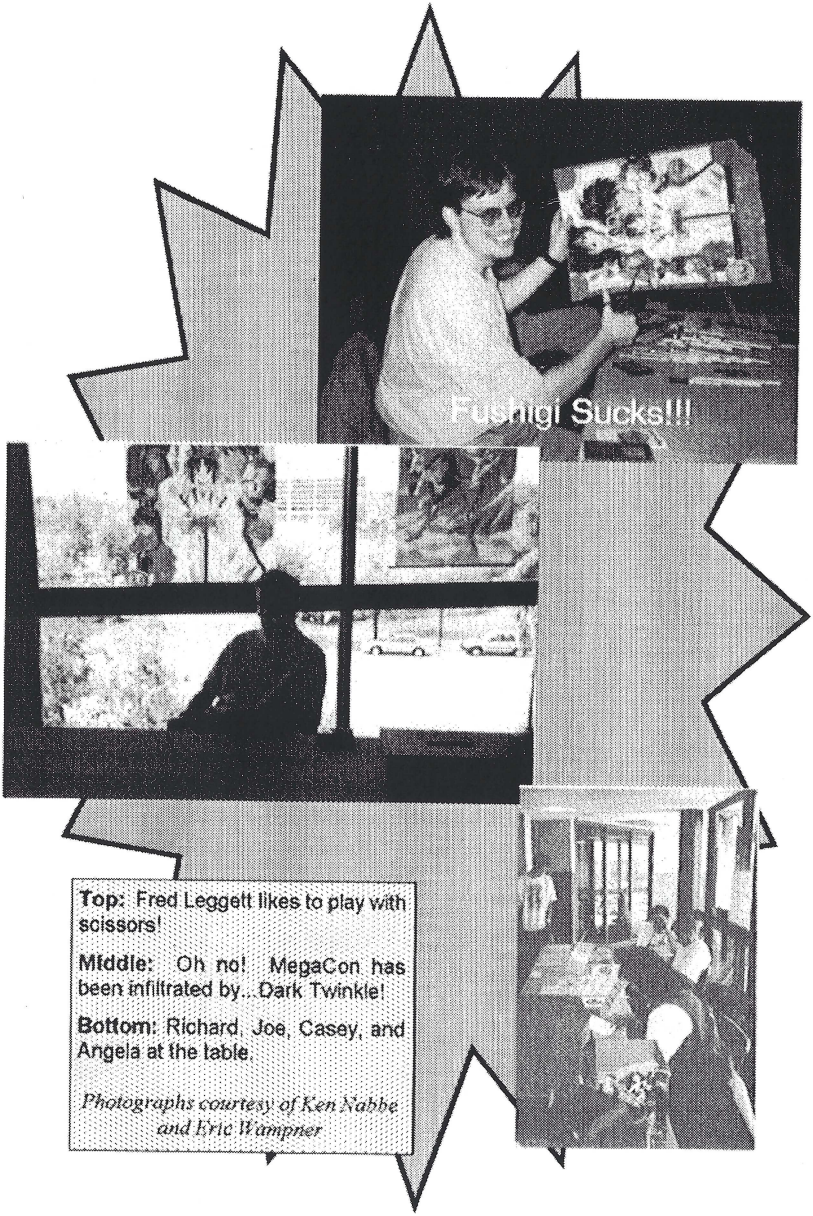
Middle: Melena, modeling John's Iria costume. <Yowza!>

Bottom: Joseph Kosturas, the guy in charge of the video equipment.

Photographs courtesy of Ken Nabbe and John Bohlen

relieved or sad. With what little money I had left, I made my last few purchases: a Bubble Gum Crisis CD and an Escaflowne banner...the same one Nicole lost earlier. She was ecstatic when I presented it to her. What can I say, JACO is just full of nice, kind-hearted, guys.

Back at the Art Show, John Bohlen showed off Melena, wearing the Iria costume he created. I hadn't gotten all the details yet but I would imagine that there were several people with their jaws on the ground



Top: Fred Leggett likes to play with scissors!

Middle: Oh no! MegaCon has been infiltrated by.. Dark Twinkle!

Bottom: Richard, Joe, Casey, and Angela at the table.

Photographs courtesy of Ken Nabbe and Eric Wampner

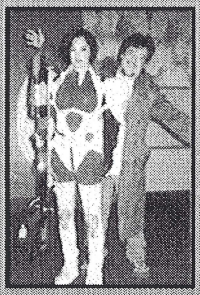
and eyes popping out. It was a real piece of work (and the costume wasn't too bad, either).

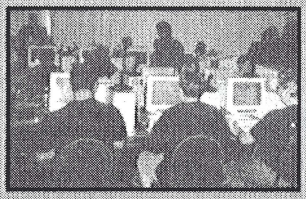
Not long after that, I left, heading home to write this very report you're reading now. Well, sort of. While there were some bad things that did happen, overall it was a pretty good show, and I look forward to doing it all again next year. Except that I'll try to keep a better watch on my stuff. Untill then, don't look a gift horse in the mouth unless you want to get a big horse loogey in your face.

MegaCon

An Assortment Of MegaCon'98 Images

Photographs courtesy of Eric Wampner, Ken Nabbe, and Carmel Bohlen





Mail Order Anime

by Lonny Volat

Years ago, anime-related merchandise was very hard to come by. There were only a few companies producing videotapes, and it was difficult to find posters, music soundtracks, and other items. Although there were a couple of nationally known companies like Books Nippon, most anime goodies were only available though small import stores that dealt with local customers only.

That was fine, if you lived in San Francisco or Atlanta, but anime fans in places like Topeka and Cincinnati (and Leesburg) were just SOL. Then came the Internet and the World Wide Web, and suddenly those fans in out-of-the-way places where folks never heard of 'annie-may' could finally sate their hunger for anime products by ordering directly from the many mail order companies that have sprouted up during the last few years.

This new feature will examine these businesses, from the smallest hole-in-the-wall to the largest warehouse superstore, in an attempt to inform the readers of where the best places are to spend their hard-earned cash.

This first installment will deal with Anime Pavilion, run by Steve Lin of Chantilly, Virginia. Anime Pavilion began as a tiny mail order company about four years ago. Since then it has increased in size to several locations in the Virginia-Maryland area. The main storefront is Anime Pavilion/Jolly Rogers Comics, in Virginia. You can contact them by e-mail by writing to stevelin@animepavilion.com or by checking out their website at www.animepavilion.com.

In addition, you can find Anime Pavilion set up at just about every anime, comic book, and sci-fi convention in the country. For instance, in addition to having attended GenCon, the San Diego Comic-Con, DragonCon, and AnimeFEST! '98 in the last two months, they will also be at AWA (Oct. 9-11), Sci-Con (Nov. 6-8 in Virginia Beach), PhilCon (Nov. 13-15 in Philly), Farpoint (the same weekend in Maryland), and the Mid-Ohio Con (Nov. 27-29). Steve has also said that he'd be more than happy to attend our own convention (if we ever get it going, that is).

Anime Pavilion handles all sorts of anime-related merchandise. They stock videotapes from all the domestic producers (no bootlegs) and carry the full line of SonMay CDs. They stock posters and scrolls from all of the popular anime shows, plus tons of miscellaneous stuff. They carry trading card sets, plush toys, keychains, dolls and model kits, action figures, tee shirts and pins and glassware. They also have a large collection of cels for sale.

Steve and his partners go to Japan several times a year on purchasing trips, and will gladly accept special orders for specific merchandise. Their prices are very good (generally about ten percent lower than the going rate on most items) and they run lots of things on special. In addition, JACO members can get a ten-percent discount on any purchase. Just remember to mention that you are with JACO, because Steve isn't a mind reader. The nine dollar shipping charge is a little steep (especially if you are just ordering a couple of CDs), but shipping is free if your order exceeds one hundred dollars.

Orders can be placed by telephone at (703) 849-9411 or by fax at (703) 968-8377. Contact them by US Postal at Anime Pavilion c/o Steve Lin, 4215 Kincaid Court, Chantilly, VA 20151; or by e-mail at stevelin@animepavilion.com. For a list of available merchandise, go and visit Anime Pavilion's web page at www.animepavilion.com. Anime Pavilion accepts checks or money orders and all major credit cards. Don't forget to ask for your JACO discount!

Anime Time Capsule

by
Lonny Volat

This is the second in a series of articles dealing with classic anime (from the 70s and 80s) that is only recently being released commercially in the United States. Science fiction adventures like Armored Trooper Votoms *or* Crusher Joe. *Dramatic comedies like* Maison Ikkoku. *Because of the glut of newer shows being released at the same time, the industry magazines overlook many of these older programs. So I have taken on the task to provide the prospective anime purchaser an idea of what these classics are all about. This issue, I will take a look at the historical action epic --* **Yotoden**.

YOTODEN

In 1987, writer **Takeshi Narumi** and artist **Kenichi Onuki** teamed together to create a spectacular tale of heroic forces set against evil demonic oppressors. Set in feudal Japan of the late 16th century, *Yotoden* pits three ninjas of different clans against the forces of warlord Nobunaga Oda. Unlike the real-life Nobunaga, the leader of the Oda clan in this story is possessed by the demon Ranmaru Mori. Ranmaru's personal army of birdlike creatures called the Oboroshu, along with other powerful monsters (created by **Junichi Watanabe** of *Iczer-1* fame) spread destruction and terror throughout the land.

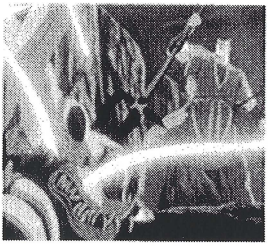
A prophecy tells of three mystical weapons that will be reunited to defeat the dark wave of evil. Each of the weapons is in the possession of three ninja families -- Clans Kasumi, Hyoga, and Hagakure. In order to prevent this threat to himself, Nobunaga orders his minions to eradicate the three ninja clans.

The three part OVA series begins with a fearsome three-headed worm-beast attacking the home village of the Kasumi clan. The sole survivor of the attack, young Ayame, flees the village with one of the cryptic weapons. She later meets with Sakon of Clan Hyoga, whom she duels with. The pair then travels to the fortress of the Hagakure clan, where they join with Ryoma. Together, the three shadow warriors begin their quest to thwart the plans of Nobunaga.

Yotoden contains all of the classic samurai drama characters, like the mysterious wandering monk, a tyrannical warlord bent on destruction, and courageous-yet-flawed heroes destined for glory and death. In addition, these strongly archetypal characters must face the scourge of otherworldly demons who do the bidding (for the time being, at least) of those whom they can corrupt and exploit towards their own diabolical

ends.

The tragedy of death is a thread which runs throughout the story, as anyone close to any (or all) of the three ninjas seems destined for gruesome end. But vengeance is the common theme that occurs in almost all of the samurai dramas, whether they are live-action movies starring Toshiro Mifune, or animated ones like *Dagger of Kamui* or *Ninja Scroll*.



The character designs, by Kenichi Onuki, are extremely well done. Onuki, also known for the series *Dragonar*, has a wonderful sense of proportion and a knack for portraying realistic movements. Great attention is given to the detail of the clothing and artifacts, with an eye towards the fantastic in one or two cases (such as Nobunaga's demon-face pauldrons).

If the artwork suffers at all, it is with the use of stock footage during the battles between the humans and the oboroshu. The various demonic monsters, designed by Watanabe, incorporate elements common to the traditional demons depicted in oriental sculptures and tapestries.

One confusing element in the story that I would like to address is the lead character. After young Ayame flees from the destruction of the Kasumi village, she adopts the masculine name Ayanosuke. Whether she is supposed to be passing herself off as a male is not known to me. Onuki's art can be described as shojo (pretty boy), and a long ponytail does not indicate anything since it was a common hairstyle. Likewise, her outfit of a belted tunic and no pants (which actually does not do much to accentuate her figure) is also fairly common among both male and female peasants of the period.

Given the environment, it would be safer for a young girl alone to masquerade as a boy, and yet when a group of bandits indicate that they have more on their minds then robbery, they never use the word "girl" when talking about her. Sakon is attracted to her, but so is Ryoma's young sister, Kikyo. Ayanosuke is terribly sensitive, and shows a great deal of regret (at the end of the series) that she never allowed Sakon to "know her as a woman", yet is even more distraught when Kikyo dies, whom she only knew for a few hours.

The quasi-historical genre is one that is often overlooked in an industry that often focuses on futuristic settings and magical worlds, and that is a shame. *Yotoden* takes a historical background (there really was a warlord named Nobunaga who dominated central Japan during that time) and mixes in a dash of supernatural to create a dynamic piece of animation. *Yotoden* would be a fine addition to any anime fan's library.

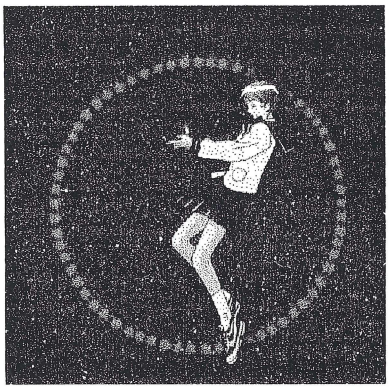
Yotoden is a three part OVA series, released in both subtitled and dubbed formats by Central Park Media and U.S. Manga Corps.

Vision Of Escaflowne Original Soundtrack (Vol. 2)

by Jackie Dolamore

One of the first things I noticed about *Vision of Escaflowne* was the music. At first it annoyed me. It was too loud, for one thing. Far too much for background music. And it just seemed to be endless singing of "Escaflowne" by a dramatic sounding choir. But, quickly, I grew to love it. This CD is my favorite of the three that make up the original soundtrack, although choosing a favorite is very difficult. It's mostly composed by **Yoko Kanno** (*Please Save My Earth*, *Macross Plus*), but a few of the songs, including my favorite, are composed by **Hajime Mizoguchi**. The two composers do a superb job, and you can hardly tell which tracks are composed by whom. They fit the feel of *Escaflowne* to a tee.

Vision of Escaflowne, for the uninformed, is a fantasy series about schoolgirl (yes, there had to be a schoolgirl, right?), Hitomi, who gets brought to a fantasy world accidentally by Van Fanel, the king of Fanelia. That is, of course, only the



beginning, and soon plots are unfolding every which way to become a very interesting, well-plotted series. The animation is wonderful for a TV series; lush and beautiful and very different. The music could be described the same as the animation.

The first track, "Vision Of Escaflowne", is a very typical *Escaflowne* piece, the sort of thing that's on every other second of the first CD. Yes, the choir is chanting "Escaflowne". It isn't something I'd normally listen to, but since it reminds me of the anime, I like it. The next one, "Fanelia", fits a fantasy city quite well. It's reminiscent of video game music, a pleasant, hum-able little song which, halfway through, descends into a little part with Christmas bells that sounds like my Mom's solstice CDs. Track 3, "Ask the Owl", is energetic and exotic, and one of my favorites. This is one of several songs on the CD with an exotic flair; something lacking from the other *Escaflowne* CDs and one of the reasons I like this CD best.

The next track, "Charm", has a

deep, sensual rhythm that pounds straight into your heart: in fact, it almost sounds sort of like a heartbeat. If you've seen the anime, this song will probably put the image of a pendulum swinging back and forth, as that is when this song plays. After that is one of my least favorites, "Country Man". It sounds like a bunch of guys sitting around, clapping, and singing what sounds like, to me (you will probably have your own interpretation), "A tyahgi on a neon sign." Following this is a nice enough but rather ordinary piece, "Mole Man" (what's with the "Man" songs?) which I usually skip through when listening.

"Cradle Song" is next, a very short song but packed with emotion. It's sad but lovely, and somewhat wistful sounding. Following that is "Machine Soldier", which sounds somewhat like one of those groups that pound on trash cans and stuff with a few mechanical noises thrown in. "Shadow Of A Doubt", my favorite, is next. The beginning of this song is beautiful; haunting cellos and violins, the music that accompanies the character of Folken. It turns into a floating, dreamlike swirl of music, then brings you back to reality with the violins again.

Following that is another favorite of mine, "A Far Cry". It's the most emotional sounding; a deep, melancholy song that pierces your soul, all sorts of dreams and thoughts caught up in its slow, haunting melody. Coming out of that, you need something more peppy, so delivering it is "Market Place", a short song that transports you to where else but a market place? Ethnic sounding percussion and a mysterious flute sound are the background for what I imagine to be vendors shouting their wares and shoppers maneuvering the crowds, speaking no language I can identify.

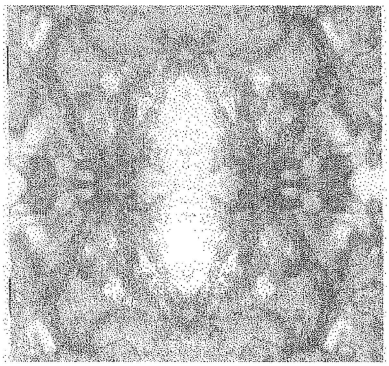
After that are the first of the vocals. Track 12, "Medicine Eater", and track 14, "Cat's Delicacy", are sung by Gabriela Robin in a whispering little voice. They're okay, but not really my thing. "Medicine Eater" has a bit of a teasing air to it, and "Cat's Delicacy", the Merle song, is downright mischievous. You can almost see Merle running down the halls making a mess. Track 13, "Godds Drunk", starts out with a military-sounding drum, but quickly turns into yet another song with people talking and exotic percussion.

Nearing the end, we have the first of the two English vocals, "Love". I'm never impressed with the English vocals. This one sounds like it could be on the radio, except that the lyrics make even less sense. "Hitomi's Theme" is next; a quiet, simple little song that fits perfectly the mood of Hitomi when she is yearning of home. The last song is another English one, and I hate it even more than "Love" - it's mushy, and the lyrics are even worse ("If your so cold/If words just hold/If want to lean/I'm here for you/If you" is the chorus, for instance, and I swear I copied that straight from the booklet).

A Review Of Three Evangelion Music CDs

by Richard Van Cleave

~refrain~



Running Time: 64:34

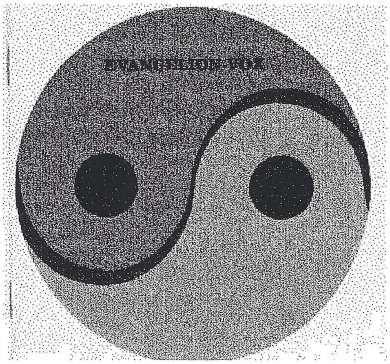
This CD is one of several Image Albums released for Neon Genesis Evangelion. It opens with an eerie instrumental piece reminiscent of the character Rei, followed by a slightly remixed version of "Cruel Angel's Thesis", the opening theme. After this track, all of the rest of the music is original, having never appeared in the series. Most of it is vocal, with some instrumental tracks thrown in for good measure. It also contains my personal favorite version of "Fly Me To The Moon" (It's a requirement for all Eva CDs to have at least one version of it), and a really cool techno sounding track.

Two of the vocal tracks also appear on the second and third soundtrack CDs. A note to anyone who listens to this CD: the 14 track opens up with a voice saying "This is the fourteenth song...", after that we hear the singers performing "Fly Me To The Moon" on a road trip. Don't ask me why they felt that it was necessary to include this...

Most of the music on this CD fits very well into the storyline in the second half of the series. (You know, where everything gets all weird...) All in all, I'd have to say this is my favorite Eva CD.

Rating: 5 out of 5

EVANGELION-VOX



Running Time: 72:36

When I stuck this CD in my car CD player and hit play, the first words out of my mouth were, "What the #^&* is this $#!^ ?" I will warn everybody — this is a rap CD. Yes, you heard correctly. RAP! The lyrics are in English since the songs were performed by British rappers. But I will sum up my feelings for this CD in two words. IT SUCKS! Don't buy it. Not even if you like rap, because it's very bad rap.

Rating: -10 out of 5

Evangelion Symphonic Suite

Running Time [Disk 1]: 49:14
Running Time [Disk 2]: 67:02

Well. I'm a sucker for symphonic suites. This two-disk set contains recordings of live performances by the New Japan Philharmonic on July 6-14, 1997. If you liked the BGM of Evangelion, then I highly recommend this set.

The music of Evangelion is beautifully performed by the orchestra, from the music of Tokyo-3 to the stunning piano solo of I. Shinji. My only complaint is that they felt it necessary to interrupt a beautiful string quartet piece to play a song from the aforementioned VOX CD, and that it contains the worst version of "Fly Me To The Moon" I've ever heard.

In spite of these two little annoyances, I would still highly recommend the set, and consider it to be an excellent addition to any Eva fan's collection.

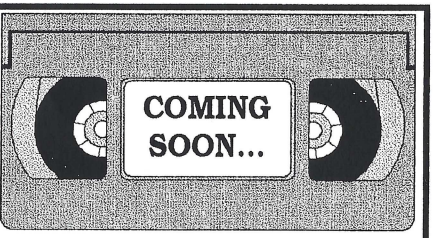
Rating: 4 out of 5

Stuff Around The Club...Continued From Page 9

pretty good, staying pretty close to the script. I would say the only major flaw is that Disney felt an American audience could stand quiet moments, so they added a lot of lines and background music. Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't. Also, I miss the songs, even though I understand the need to change them. All in all, not a bad job. I've definitely seen worse dubs in the anime market.

Well, that's all for now. Have a great summer, enjoy the issue, and I'll see you at the next meeting!

Nicole Kintner
Vice-President



Title			Date
Wrath of the Ninja			06/02
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Big Wars			06/10
DVD	Sub/Dub	180min.	$29.95
Voltage Fighter Gowcaizer			06/10
DVD	Sub/Dub	180min.	$29.95
The Silent Service			07/07
VHS	Sub	100min.	$29.95
	Dub		$19.95
Patlabor TV Series Vol. 1			07/07
VHS	Sub	120min.	$29.95
Voltage Fighter: The Movie			08/04
VHS	Sub	90min.	$29.95
	Dub		$24.95
Gall Force: Eternal Story			08/04
DVD	Sub/Dub	86min.	$29.95

So You Want To Be A Demon On Wheels?

In 1967, a company called Trans-Lux bought the rights to an anime series called Mach Go Go Go, created by Tatsuo Yoshida and produced by Tatsunoko Studios. That series was translated into English and appeared in front of millions of delighted youngsters as Speed Racer. The show quickly captured the hearts and imaginations of its viewers with the adventures of its young hero (and title character), Speed Racer -- and his fabulous racing car, the Mach 5.

What kid didn't want to drive around in that pointy-nosed convertible with all those neato gadgets like the auto-jacks and the rotary saws and that nifty remote-controlled bird? Well, thanks to Jaleco USA, Inc., owners of the Sony PlayStation can do just that.

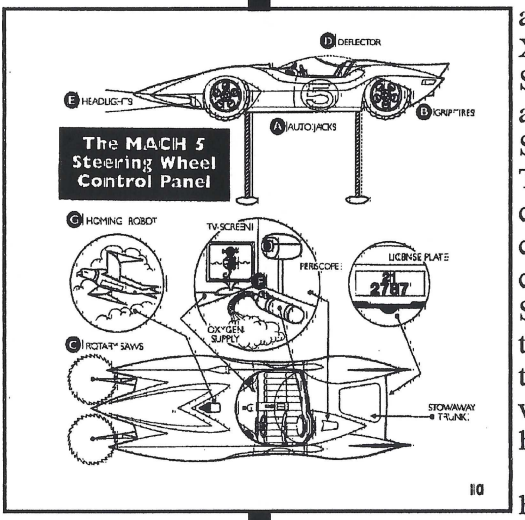
"Speed Racer" is a one-player game that puts you behind the wheel of the Mach 5. The object, of course, is to win races. Each race pits you against nine other drivers. In the opening races, these other drivers are just generic faceless goobers, with the exception of Racer X (who, unknown to Speed, is really his older brother Rex Racer, who ran away from home years ago and who now works as a secret agent for the International Police, none of which has anything to do with the game).

As you win more events, other cars will join in the races against you; cars like the GRX, the X-13, and Snake Oiler of the Car Acrobatic Team. If you're good enough, then you might even be afforded the opportunity of driving Racer X's car, the Shooting Star!

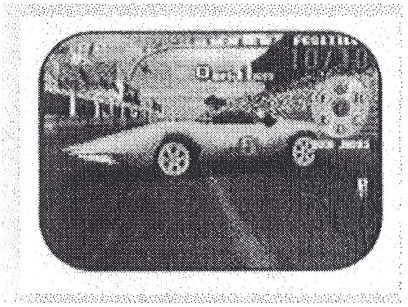
After the game's opening credits (which come straight off of the TV series), the player goes to the Main Menu screen. By selecting "Options" you can determine the type of race (Normal, or Endurance) and the skill level of your opponents (Very Easy, Easy, Normal, Hard, or Very Hard). You can set up your controller to a layout that suits your fingers best (3 pre-set layouts plus a special option that lets you determine exactly which button does what). You can also access your memory card (to save and load games) and check the rankings.

Selecting "Sound" from the Main Menu lets you listen to all the different background music selections, including the way cool Alpha Team Techno-Mix. The thumping beat reminds me of the music from Mortal Kombat, and it is

sprinkled with sound bites from Speed, Trixie, Racer X, and the skull-faced guy who leads the Car Acrobatic Team, plus some measures from the opening theme music. I came up with a really awesome Speed Racer music video to go with the song. Too bad I don't have the equipment to put a good one together.



When you choose "Start Race" from the Main Menu screen, you are first given the opportunity to select a track to race on. The tracks are separated by length, and the length determines the number of laps that must be completed. For instance, the short track is six laps (unless you



choose Endurance Races under Options, then the race is twenty-five laps). You may also select to run a time trial, in which you compete only against Racer X (or against Speed, if you are driving the Shooting Star). Then you must choose your car. Until you can drive the Shooting Star, the Mach 5 is the only vehicle you have available.

There are, however, three different versions from which you can pick. Auto-G is the easiest -- the player does not have to shift gears and the car holds to the track pretty well. Your top speed is relatively low -- a creeping 195 mph. Auto-S is more difficult to handle, but much faster (and you still don't have to shift gears). Manual, as the name implies, requires that you shift gears.

Although it might seem that this adds to the difficulty, I find that I am more successful when I do the gear-shifting myself. This is because of the problem with sharp curves. Since there is no in-between with acceleration (you are either driving "pedal to the metal" or completely off the gas, a common failing in driving games), I've been able to take the sharp curves easier if I simply drop down a gear or two right before entering the turn, and then shift up about two-thirds of the way through it. After selecting course and car, it's off to the starting pole.

Starting in the number ten position (Speed never gets the pole, it seems), you must then use your skills as a driver, as well as some copious cheating, in order to win the race. And the Mach 5 is well equipped to cheat, let me tell you. Are there some cars in your path? Extend the rotary saws and slice your way through those slow moving bastards! Are you still in last place? Use your auto-jacks to jump over a barrier, cut through some trees with your saws, take a quick trip through the lake using your underwater breathing apparatus, and viola, you're in the lead!

A display of the steering wheel hub shows what item is currently selected. All of the Mach 5's nifty gizmos are available to you at the touch of a button, although some are more useful than others are.

For example, the homing robot simply flies out to circle around Racer X's car (showing you his position on the track display). This doesn't strike me as all that important to know. Other items can be extremely useful though, like the special grip tires that can be used for cruising on through certain tunnels when the other drivers are slipping around in the mud. Just remember Speed Racer's motto -- Cheat To Win!

"Speed Racer" uses 3D-rendered polygon graphics that look really nice. The cars look fabulous (especially in the drive-by replays after the race), and the backgrounds look very realistic. The tracks utilize elements from the various races Speed participated in the series, including the tunnel formed out of the rib cage of some long-dead dinosaur (from the Fire Race). The longer the track, the more shortcuts are available. The trick is in finding them. You'd think someone could have been courteous enough to put up some signs.

Time is a dynamic element in the background -- the sun sets and darkness sets in as the race continues. If you are playing an endurance race, the sun will rise (and maybe fall) again. The only thing missing is the waves of confetti that always seemed to fall whenever Speed won a race.

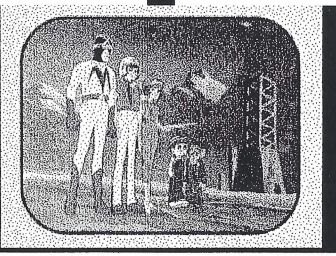
Of course, the game is not without it's faults. Some are minor annoyances; a couple of them are major problems. Most prominent among the faults is the one player aspect of the game. I realize that few of the other cars in the Speed Racer universe have any special abilities, and the Mach 5 would definitely give its driver a decided advantage. But it is still more fun to play against someone else.

Always starting at the rear is irritating. I would've rather the game designers used the time trials as a means of determining pole positions. As it is, the time trial is

just like a regular race, the only difference is that you have one opponent instead of nine. There is no reverse gear, which could've been useful in a couple of places. In one of the tunnels, a wrong turn puts you up against a sealed door. Cutting the door open leads to a shortcut, but just touching the door with the saws won't open it. You have to hit the door at a high rate of speed for the saws to work. But without a reverse gear, you have to slowly inch the car around, drive back a distance, then inch the car around again. By the time you've gotten through the shortcut, you will have lost any advantage to using it in the first place. Life sure is a bitch without an "R" on your transmission.

Another annoyance is the lack of violence. Now, I realize that this is a racing game and not Doom, but the many races that occurred throughout the series were punctuated by numerous cars doing the "Crash And Burn" chorus. Nothing like that happens in this game. Even ripping through another car with rotary saws only causes it to flip through the air a couple of times. A few seconds later and that SOB is right on your tail again. Jaleco sure knows how to take the fun out of a game. <G>

In spite of its few faults, "Speed Racer" is a worthy addition to your game library. If you like racing games, that is. I mean, why drive around in some boring old Indy car or one of those NASCAR rhinoceros' when you could be burning up the track in the Mach 5! And none of the other racing games have Trixie yelling "Go, Speed! Go!" as you race by the stands. Cool graphics, cool music, even Spridle and Chim-Chim dancing a jig as the game loads. So how can you lose? Get it today, and in no time at all you too can be driving your friends bonkers by singing the theme song over and over and over and over and over . . .



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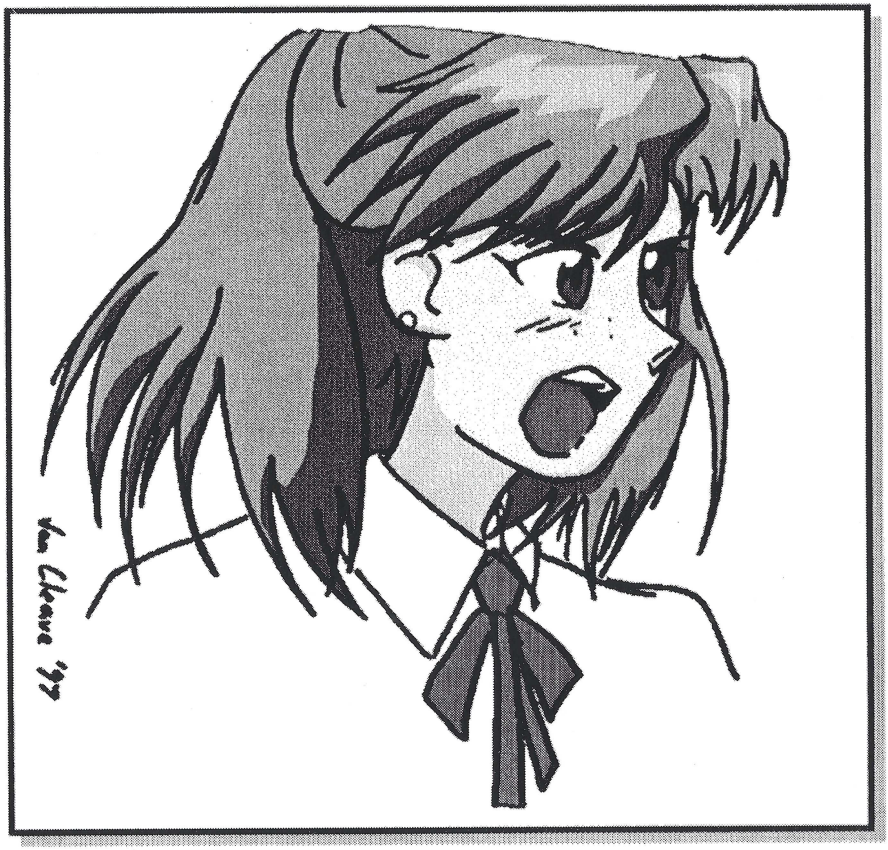

Richard Van Cleave 1997

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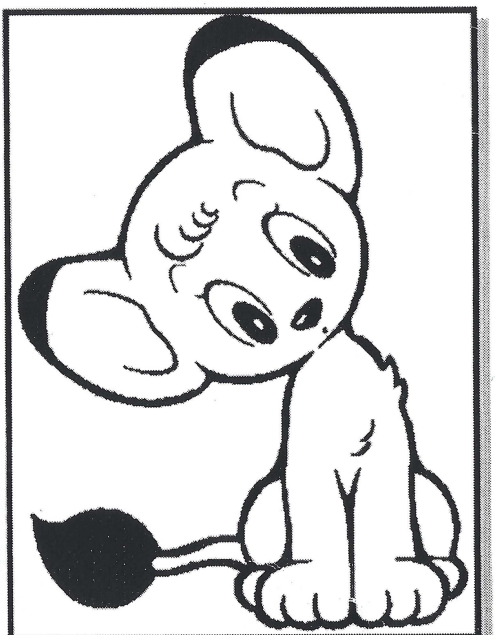

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IMAGES OF JACO

by Eric Wampner

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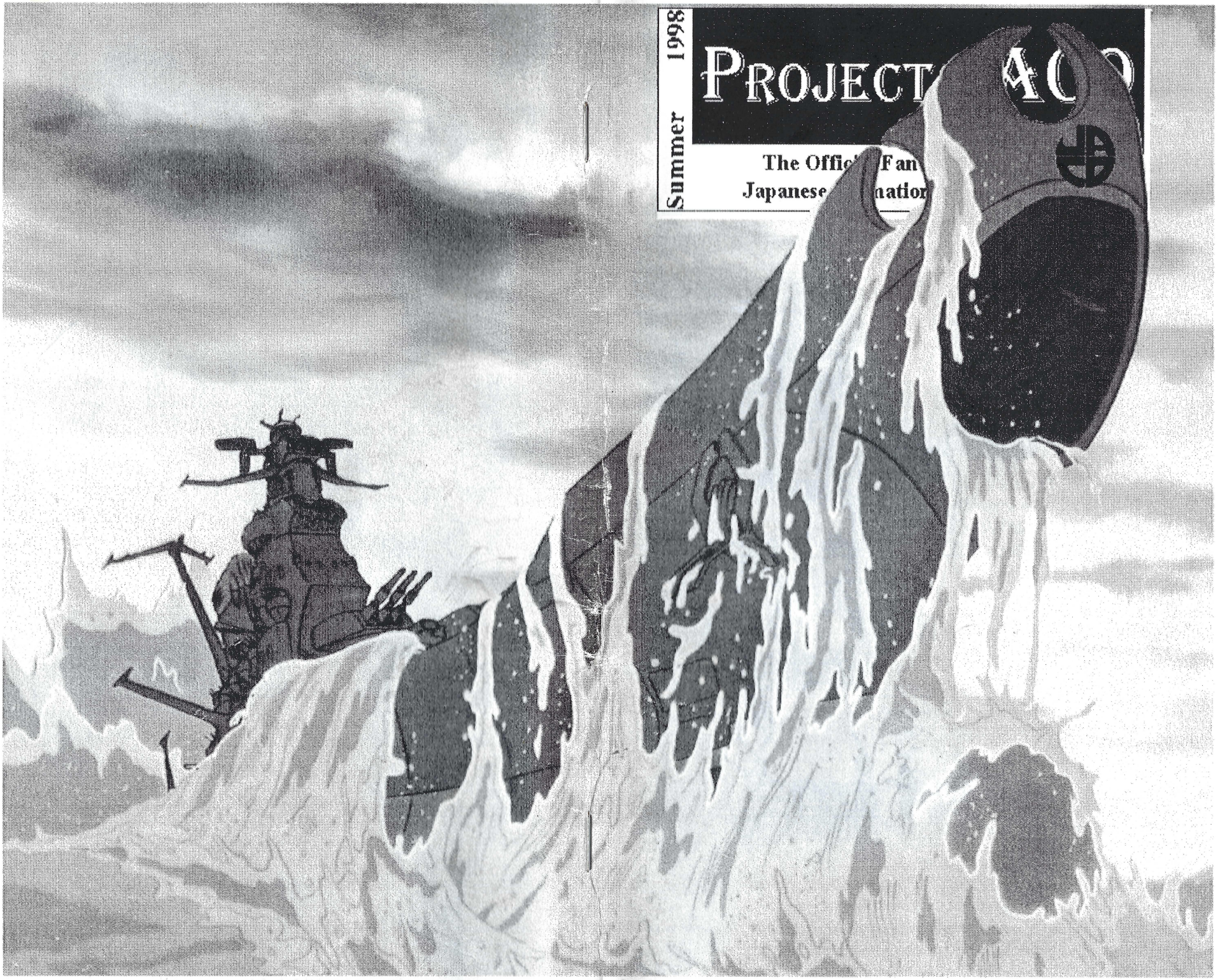

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